

REMARKS

In part 12 of the Office Action Summary, none of the boxes are checked. However, the applicants filed certified copies of four priority documents in the international phase of this application. Therefore, the applicants believe that box 3 in the priority section of the Office Action Summary should be checked to indicate that these documents were received by the USPTO from the International Bureau. In the next correspondence from the USPTO, the applicants respectfully request acknowledgement of the priority claim and the priority documents.

Claims 1 and 3-12 are pending. Claim 2 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 4-9 have been withdrawn. Claims 10-12 are new. The applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of this application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

The specification has been amended to change "at the internal" to "in" to correct a grammatical error. This is considered to be an obvious error that does not involve new matter.

Claim 1 was rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by JP-A 02-107682 to Inako *et al.* (hereafter, Inako). The applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn for the following reasons.

Claim 1 concerns the hole diameter of the through hole at the surface of the pressure sensitive adhesive sheet. In claim 1, the upper limit of the hole diameter of the through hole at the surface of the pressure sensitive adhesive sheet is 40 μm . On the other hand, Inako discloses through holes of which the diameter is 0.2-1.0 mm (200-1000 μm). Therefore, claim 1 cannot be anticipated by Inako, and this rejection should be withdrawn.

A result of the invention of claim 1 is that the through hole (the internal space of the through hole) cannot be seen by the naked eye. This is supported in the specification at page 14, where the following is stated:

"Note that, if the hole diameter of the through hole 2 at the surface 1A of the pressure sensitive adhesive sheet 1 is 40 μm or less, the hole itself of the through hole 2 (internal space of the through hole 2) can be invisible to the naked eye. Therefore, in case it is particularly required that the hole itself of the through hole 2 is not invisible on the appearance of the pressure sensitive adhesive sheet 1, it is preferable that the upper limit of the hole diameter of the through hole 2 at the surface 1A of the pressure sensitive adhesive sheet 1 is 40 μm ."

Claims 2 and 3 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Inako and US 6627844 to Liu *et al.* (hereafter, Liu). Claim 2 has been canceled and thus will not be discussed. Claim 3 depends on claim 1 and is thus considered to be patentable at least based on its dependency for the reasons given above.

Claims 10-12 are new. Support for claim 10 is found at page 14, line 22, to page 15, line 6, of the specification. The advantage of the subject matter of claim 10 is that the through hole (internal space of the through hole) is invisible to the naked eye, even when the base material is transparent, when the hole diameter is 0.1 to 60 μm . Claim 10 depends on claim 1 and is therefore considered to be patentable at least for the reasons given for the patentability of claim 1.

Claim 11 is a new independent claim that requires, among other things, that the through holes are formed by laser beam machining. Inako fails to disclose a pressure sensitive adhesive sheet in which through holes are formed by a laser beam machining. The through holes in Inako are formed by a cutting out process. In a process such as that of Inako, a burr is generally formed around the through hole at the side from which the cutting blade comes out, and a dent is formed around the through hole at the side into which the cutting blade is inserted. On the other hand, there is no deformation or burr on the laminate around the through holes formed by laser

beam machining, because the part of the material to which the laser beam is radiated evaporates and disappears. Thus, the through holes are regular and cleaner than those of Inako. Therefore, good air deflation properties are obtained, as described in the specification.

Liu discloses through holes that are formed on a work piece by laser beam machining. However, Liu only discloses a nozzle plate of an ink-jet head as a work piece. The nozzle plate is made of hard material. The work piece in Inako is a marking sheet that is made of soft material. There is no reason for one of ordinary skill in the art to apply the laser beam machining of Liu to the marking sheet of Inako because the material of the work pieces are very different.

Claim 12 depends on claim 11 and is thus considered to be patentable at least for the reasons given in the discussion of claim 11. Further, claim 12 requires that the hole diameter gradually decreases from a back surface to a front surface of the pressure sensitive adhesive sheet. This feature is not disclosed or suggested by Inako or Liu.

In view of the foregoing, the applicants submit that this application is in condition for allowance. A timely notice to that effect is respectfully requested. If questions arise, the examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone.

If there are any problems with the payment of fees, please charge any underpayments and credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 50-1147.

Respectfully submitted,
/James E. Barlow/
James E. Barlow
Reg. No. 32,377

Posz Law Group, PLC
12040 South Lakes Drive, Suite 101
Reston, VA 20191
Phone 703-707-9110
Fax 703-707-9112
Customer No. 23400